Parents as Teachers During COVID-19

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Abstract

Following U.S. school closures in March 2020 due to the Coronavirus ("COVID-19") pandemic, parents have had to play substantially larger roles in their children's education than previously. Little is known about the resulting home learning environment during COVID-19. Attendees of this poster will learn what distance learning practices parents have engaged in during COVID-19 and how such practices have varied. Such information may provide implications for future research, practice, and educational reform.

Introduction

- Due to the recent Coronavirus pandemic, schools in the United States had closed by April 2020.
- Parents were required to play a substantially larger direct role in their children's education than they had been prior to COVID-19.
 However, we know little about the home learning environment during COVID-19.
- Such knowledge is critical for several reasons:
 - 1. We need information about what occurred during COVID-19 to help educators assist families moving forward.
 - 2. Distance learning may become more prevalent in the future even after COVID-19 (Bush, 2020).
- Although the role of parents in their children's education has long been considered important, and although we know quite a lot about what parents do at home to facilitate their children's learning (e.g., Serpell et al., 2005), we expect that the demands of distance learning differ from "business as usual."

Research Questions:

- 1. What types of activities are parents engaging in to assist their children (across ages) with distance learning?
- 2. Are there significant age-related differences in the frequencies in which parents report assisting their children with specific activities during distance learning?
- 3. Is there a relation between engaging in distance learning and parent-reported stress?
- 4. Is there an association between parent concerns related to distance learning and type of distance learning activities parents report completing?

Methods

Sample:

- 361 parents of children <18 years currently living with them:
- 78% (n = 281) reported that their children were engaging in distance learning
- # of parents per age group:
 - <5 years only = 30%; 6-11 years only = 20%; 12-17 years only = 17%; multiple age groups = 33%</p>

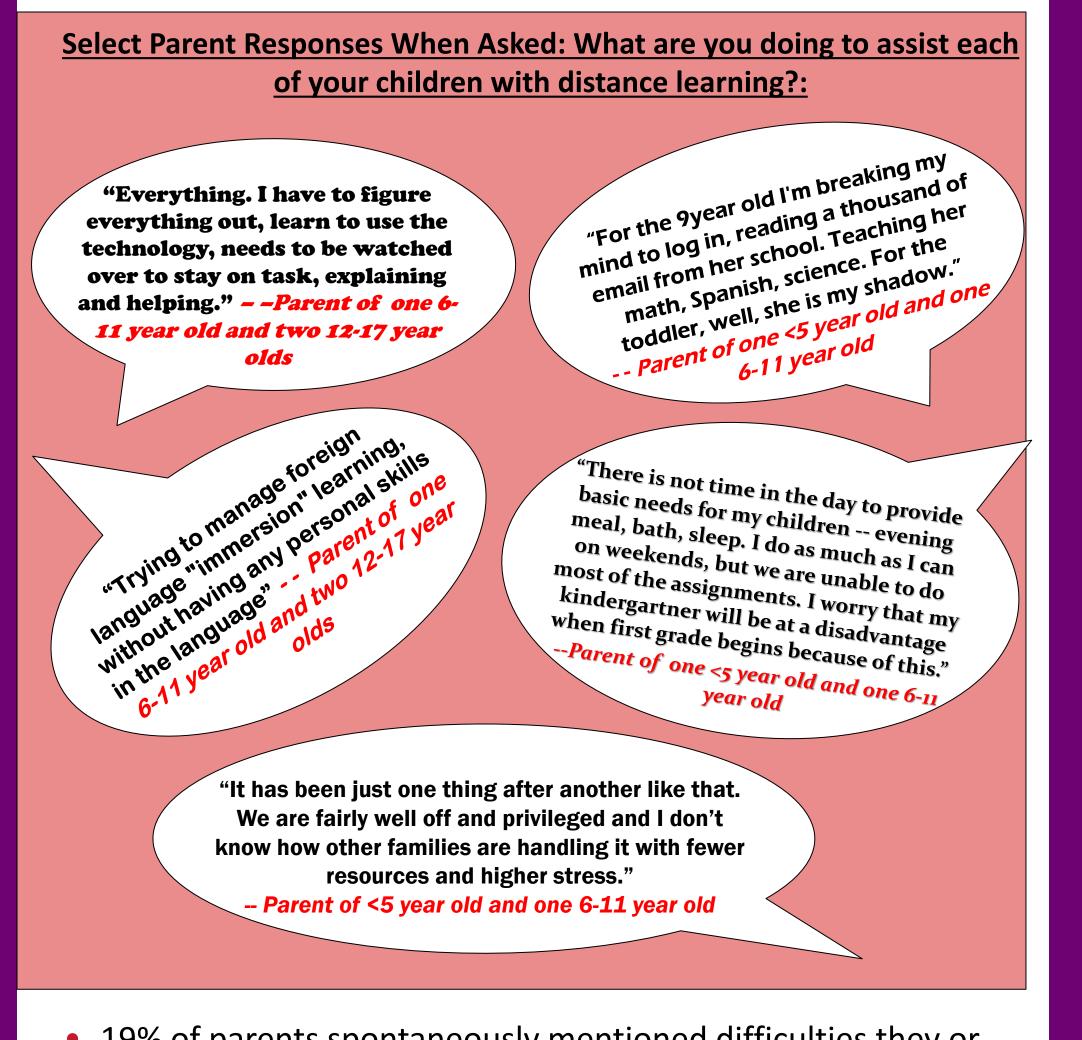
Methods

Table 1. Descriptives

Variable	Entire Sample Mean (SD) or %	Parents Engaging in Distance Learning Mean (SD) or %
Mothers	90%	91%
Race – White	87%	88%
Ethnicity – Hispanic	6%	7%
Average Age of Parent (Years)	41 (6.20)	42 (5.90)
Annual Income ≥ \$100k	81%	84%
Highest Level of Parent Education ≥ Bachelor's Degree	96%	95%

Measures and Procedures:

- These data come from a larger study. For this poster, parents were asked how many children they have and the ages of their children.
- Parents also were asked to describe the types of home-learning activities they engaged in with their children using an open-ended question. Responses were reliably coded into six categories: teaching; monitoring; providing technological support (IT); finding learning materials and/or resources; providing emotional encouragement/motivation/support; and communicating with teachers.
- Parents also were asked to report their level of stress related to COVID and to supporting their children during distance learning.



• 19% of parents spontaneously mentioned difficulties they or their children (and therefore they) were having with aspects of distance learning.

Results

Data Analysis:

- Following descriptive analyses (Table 1), χ^2 and logistical regressions analyses were conducted.
- Parent age, parent gender, and parent race/ethnicity were included as covariates.

Findings:

Research Question 1: What types of activities are parents engaging in to assist their children (across ages) with distance learning?

Table 2. Percentage of Parent-Reported Engagement During Distance Learning

Type of Activity	% of Parents Who Reported Engaging in This Activity (n = 237*)
Teaching	65
Monitoring	63
IT	46
Resources	10
Emotional Support	10
Communication	9

Note. * 237 parents reported what activities they did with their children.

- Highest percentage of parents reported monitoring, teaching and IT.
 Lowest percentage of parents reported providing emotional encouragement/motivation, communicating with teachers, and
- Research Question 2: Are there significant age-related differences in the frequencies in which parents report assisting their children with specific activities during distance learning?

finding learning materials and/or resources.

Table 3. Percentage of Parent-Reported Engagement During Distance Learning by Age of Child

Type of Activity	% of Parents Who Reported Engaging in This Activity By Age of Child			
	< 5 years	6 to 11 years	12 to 17 years	
Teaching	48	65	49	
Monitoring	37	64	67	
IT	25	49	33	
Resources	8	8	6	
Emotional Support	3	8	13	
Communication	1	8	12	

- <5 years: monitoring = teaching > IT [χ2 (df = 2, N= 237) = 10.40, p
 = .006].
- 6-11 years: monitoring = teaching > IT [$\chi 2$ (df = 2, N = 237) = 10.91, p = .004].
- 12 -17 years: monitoring > teaching > IT [χ2 (df = 2, N= 237) = 17.37, p = .0002].

Results

Research Question 3: Is there a relation between engaging in distance learning and parent-reported stress?

- Parents who reported engaging in distance learning were over two times more likely to report being stressed due to COVID than parents not engaging in distance learning. (OR = 2.02; 95% CI[1.06, 3.85]; p = .033)
- Significantly greater proportion of parents of 6 to 11 year olds (69%) reported concern about supporting their children during distance learning as compared to the other two age groups (<5 years = 54%; 12-17 years = 57%). [$\chi 2$ (df = 2, N= 357) = 9.38, p = 000]

Research Question 4: Is there an association between parent concerns related to distance learning and type of distance learning activities parents report completing?

Regardless of age of child, there was no significant association (p > .10) between the type of distance learning activity and whether parents reported concern about supporting their children in distance learning.

Discussion and Implications

- Parents most frequently reported supporting their children in distance learning by engaging in teaching, monitoring, and IT.
- Parents who reported engaging in distance learning were over two times more likely to report being stressed due to COVID than parents not engaging in distance learning.
- Future research directions and practical implications:
- Investigate not only which activities parents are engaging in during distance learning but also how often they engage in each activity.
- Continue to explore how parents are supporting their students' educational programming and the relation to parent stress over time given COVID-19 continues to be a problem.
- Help support future educational programming if post-COVID there is increased use of technology at home and/or changes in expectations for parent involvement at home.

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